



AFFIRMATION:

UNITED METHODISTS FOR LESBIAN AND GAY CONCERNS

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SPRING 1986

WORKING FOR THE FUTURE IN SEATTLE

At the spring meeting in Seattle, Affirmation members selected co-spokesperson and coordinating committee members to serve through the next General Conference of the United Methodist Church, to be held in April 1988. Morris Floyd, of Minneapolis, and Mary Gaddis, of Holy City, California, were reelected as the organization's two co-spokespersons. Named to the coordinating committee were Judy Cayot, of Albany, California; Mary Gaddis; Lyle Loder, of West Hollywood, California; D. J. Porter, of New Hope, Pennsylvania; Beth Richardson, of Nashville; Maggie Roe, of Lincoln, Nebraska; Bradley Rymph, of Washington, D.C.; Mike Underhill, of Chicago; and one lesbian and one gay man who, because of discriminatory denominational and societal policies, cannot be publicly named.

Affirmation members also decided to continue to strengthen the Reconciling Congregation Program by planning a consultation, tentatively set for spring 1987, of representatives of all Reconciling Congregations across the United States. Affirmation also made plans to expand promotion of the Reconciling Congregation Program's quarterly journal, Manna for the Journey, which provides materials for congregations to use in improving ministry to and with lesbians and gay men.

Future plans for local and regional organizing by Affirmation members were also discussed in Seattle. It was noted that local Affirmation bodies now exist in 18 areas across the nation, up from 7 in April 1985. Gatherings for Affirmation members from broader geographic regions of the United States are being planned, beginning later in 1986. A national "Family Reunion" retreat is tentatively scheduled for July 1-5, 1987.

FALL MEETING TO FOCUS ON "FAMILY"

Affirmation's next semi-annual meeting, scheduled for September 19-21 in Washington, D.C., will focus on the theme, "Building Our Family." It will feature discussions on what it means to be family in the lesbian/gay context in which the church is not always sensitive nor supportive. It will also offer work sessions for further developing the Reconciling Congregations program, Regional Organizing, our 1988 General Conference presence, newsletters and media relations, and organizational management systems. The broad outline for the weekend is:

Friday evening (beginning 7pm) - Orientation and Introductions;
Worship/Reflection Session on the meaning of "family";
Opening reception.

Saturday morning & early afternoon - Work sessions on
Affirmation's programs.

Later Saturday afternoon - Total group business session.

Saturday evening - Family dinner and "talent show"

Sunday morning - Closing business & worship with Christ UMC.

For those folks from the Northeast (ME, MA, NH, VT, RI, CT, NY, PA, NJ, DE, MD, DC, and Northern VA), there will be a special Regional Organizing event in advance of the meeting on Friday afternoon, Sept. 19, 12:30-5:00 pm (a separate mailing will be sent to Northeasterners on this).

NOW IS A GOOD TIME TO MAKE PLANS TO ATTEND THIS EVENT. MARK YOUR CALENDERS NOW! MAKE TRAVEL RESERVATIONS NOW! A registration form is included in this newsletter. Please send it in promptly!

Information as to exact locations, transportation into town from airports & train stations, hotels, etc. will be sent to you once your registration is received. As before, registration is \$2.00 per \$1000.00 of annual income plus participation in the travel pool (first time attendees may exempt themselves from the travel pool-see article elsewhere in this newsletter). Participants should plan on arriving in D.C. area by 5:30 pm on Friday evening and leaving after 2:00 pm on Sunday. Those flying may use either Washington National, Dulles International, or Baltimore-Washington International airports (frequently Dulles is less expensive).

Our previous two meetings have set records for attendance and quality of work. We hope new records at our next "family gathering" this fall. You can make that happen by planning on being with us now! Join us in the Nation's Capital this fall!

AFFIRMATION'S RESPONSE TO AIDS

At the Affirmation meeting in Seattle, Washington on April 6, a statement to the people of the United Methodist Church on AIDS was adopted as follows:

Along with all members of the gay/lesbian community, we have been hard hit by the tragedy of AIDS. We have lost to it two of the earliest leaders in our movement, Michael Collins and Richard Cash, as well as other friends, lovers, and family members. In sharing their struggles and their deaths, we have experienced first hand not only the grief of these losses but also the violence of homophobia fueled by AIDS hysteria.

We acknowledge leadership in the United Methodist Church's response to AIDS provided by Washington Square Church of New York City, as well as more recent initiatives as represented by: Conferences of the church: North Georgia, New York, California-Nevada, and California-Pacific; a special issue on AIDS in engage/social action, published by the General Board of Church and Society in reaction to the 1984 General Conference referred to them; and program development currently in process at the General Board of Discipleship and the Health and Welfare Program Dept. of the General Board of Global Ministries.

At the same time, we call on the United Methodist Church to confess the sin of omission represented by its slow and still inadequate response. We deplore denominational policies about homosexuality in particular, which have contributed to the timidity of that response in some cases and which have reinforced a preference for judgment over compassion toward those most at risk for this disease.

We urge clergy and lay leadership at all levels of our denomination to reject the theology of bad faith that sees AIDS as God's revenge on gays, a position inconsistent with the gospel and unsupported by the facts. We hope to hear church leaders' voices lifted strongly against proposed policies, such as quarantine and employment, insurance, or other discrimination, that are inappropriate in medical or public health policy and that further reflect society's blaming of those infected by a deadly virus.

We ask specifically that the United Methodist Council of Bishops provide leadership to the church on this matter by a pastoral letter.

We urge United Methodist congregations and Annual Conferences to develop resources for pastoral support of persons who have AIDS, their families, and other loved ones by providing training events and implementing strategies developed by general church agencies and ecumenical or interfaith working groups.

We call on congregations to make available their buildings and other resources to undergird the work of community-based AIDS education, patient-support, and advocacy efforts. We also call on church bodies with funds set aside for health-care services to use some of those finances to help meet the medical, spiritual, and physical needs of person with AIDS and their loved ones.

Since risk-reduction education is the only means presently available to limit the spread of this epidemic, we call on United Methodists everywhere to support effective and explicit risk-reduction efforts not only for gay and bisexual men, who largely have begun following safe-sex procedures, but for groups who have been difficult to reach with the risk-reduction message, particularly intravenous drug abusers and men who engage in sexual behavior with other men but do not consider themselves gay or bisexual.

We ask for the prayers of all United Methodists for those who are ill, for those who are grieving, and for the worried well.

We affirm that these recommendations are consistent with the United Methodist Book of Discipline and with the Biblical imperatives for mercy and justice. We look to the day when these actions can be received enthusiastically by all United Methodists.



SUPPORT FOR AIDS VICTIMS

A resolution pledging support for AIDS victims and their families was passed by directors of the United Methodist General Board of Discipleship on February 28. On this board there are three members of Affirmation and one minister from a Reconciling Congregation.

Board members unanimously endorsed the resolution to create resources and guidelines for the use of local congregations in counseling and providing support for those suffering from AIDS and their families. While acknowledging church responsibility for such support, the resolution referred to "fears and prejudices" that may have delayed a national church response.

The resolution acknowledged that, while some local United Methodist churches have implemented such support ministries, the total church has "not always responded lovingly in the midst of this epidemic in part because of deeply held fears and prejudices." Further, "We ask God's forgiveness in this regard," the resolution read.

AFFIRMATION EXPANDING MEDIA OUTREACH

Plans are being made to greatly expand Affirmation's public relations outreach in both religious media and the lesbian/gay community. A variety of considerations are behind this decision:

- 1) The United Methodist Reporter's recent decision to cancel our advertisement in it forces us to look to other avenues to make contact with United Methodist lesbians and gay men, as well as other church members who share our concerns.
- 2) As Affirmation grows, it is appropriate that we establish a recognized presence in the lesbian/gay community alongside MCC, Dignity, and Integrity.
- 3) We have important perspectives that could benefit others in the religious and lesbian/gay communities but cannot fully share those perspectives until our existence and programs are better known.

I am developing three major list--United Methodist Church-related, lesbian/gay community, and general religious media--of publications, broadcasts, news services, etc., that should receive news releases from us as we hold business meetings, sponsor special conferences, and respond to church events. For example, each publication or other medium on these lists thus far received a release about our Seattle meeting and a copy of the AIDS statement we adopted there.

The UMC list currently includes engage/social action, Info-Serve, Newscope, United Methodist Communications, United Methodist News Service, and The United Methodist Reporter. The community list includes major lesbian/gay national media, as well as publications in many cities across the United States (including cities in which Affirmation has an organized presence). The general media list, which I am just beginning to assemble, will include both religious-page editors from major metropolitan newspapers and nondenominational religious publications that might be interested in Affirmation's message and work.

To help make these lists complete, I would appreciate Affirmation members sending me names and addresses of their Annual Conference newspaper editors, local lesbian/gay publications, local religion page editors, and other religious publications we should add to our list. Since I would also like to get some sense of how widely our releases are printed, I would greatly appreciate members sending me copies of any references to Affirmation that they see in any publication. My address is listed along with other members of the coordinating committee.

Brad Rymph



PLANNING FOR 1988: IT'S TIME TO START

While the 1988 General Conference may seem a long way off, its not too early for local groups to begin thinking about trying to have an impact at that event. How can you do that? The best way is through local Annual Conference delegations.

1987 Annual Conference Sessions will be the time when local delegates are elected to the 1988 Conference. While a few local groups may want to try electing an openly gay man or lesbian, for most folks this will not be realistic. More likely is the election of persons who share Affirmation's perspectives and who are willing to speak those perspectives.

The upcoming 1986 Annual Conference Sessions are times to begin talking with local people about what the make-up of your delegation could be. Likely allies in these discussions include MFSA chapters, local clergywomen's groups, women's caucuses, Commissions on the Status and Role of Women, Boards of Church and Society, human sexuality education agencies, and (in some conferences) ethnic minority caucuses/groups. Also, don't forget Reconciling Congregations as resources.

Use the 1986 Sessions to talk up with folks who you want elected. Secure commitments from likely prospects and the strategize with others about how to get them elected. While it may seem impossible, getting one or two strong advocates elected in a delegation is not beyond reality. And those voices can change the nature of a delegation.

Don't pass up opportunities now. All the changes we'd like to see may not occur in 1988. But it is a time to build consciousness and support. Let's see what we can do to influence 1988!

John Hannay



RCP EMPOWERS PEOPLE

The Reconciling Congregation Program is two years old this Spring. There are, currently, 15 local churches who have declared themselves Reconciling Congregations. In addition, there are at least 10 to 15 other local churches who are somewhere in the process of becoming Reconciling Congregations.

The Reconciling Congregation Program is a grass-roots program which is enabling exciting ministries to and with gay men and lesbians. A recent conference in Lincoln, Nebraska, gave representatives of the RCP the chance to share some of the learnings of the first two years of the Reconciling Congregation Program.

Co-coordinators Mark Bowman and Beth Richardson led two workshops on the Reconciling Congregation and its usefulness as a model of local church ministry. Participants in the workshops represented a variety of denominations and local church settings.

A primary message of the workshop was "Every local church can become a Reconciling Congregation." (For some churches, it may take a week. For others, it may take ten years.)

Participants learned that the individual who wants to enable his or her local church to develop its relationship to gay men and lesbians should remember three steps: (1) Develop a support group for yourself. Do not work alone. Find other people who can give you support. (2) Evaluate the history of your local church's relationship to homosexuality. Has the word ever been mentioned in your church? (If it has not, that may be the place to begin.) (3) Strategize what is the best way for your local church to examine its calling to be in ministry to and with gay men and lesbians. This strategy should fill your local church. It may mean a study in a Sunday school class, a committee assigned by the administrative council, or it may mean an informal discussion at a coffee gathering.

Participants in the workshop had a chance to practice these steps in a case study setting and to discuss their shared learnings.

Empowerment was a result of this time of sharing together. Every church can become a church which is more open to gay men and lesbians and bi-sexuals. And each of us can be enablers to other people in whatever situations we live and work.

For more information about how you or your church can be more involved in the Reconciling Congregation Program, write [redacted], Nashville, TN [redacted]



MANNA FOR THE JOURNEY NEEDS SUBSCRIPTIONS

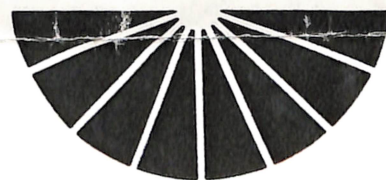
Manna for the Journey, now a year old, is still in need of readers! Responses to the first year of MFTJ have been very positive. We are beginning to receive subscription support from our brothers and sisters in other denominations. We still need 200 subscriptions to reach our first year goal of 1,000 subscribers.

Send Manna for the Journey to your parents, your pastor, your friends in other denominations. Please, help us reach our goal.

Upcoming issues include:

Summer, 1986	Denominational Policies
Fall, 1986	Healing Ministries
Winter, 1987	Homophobia

Subscriptions are \$10.00 per year (single copies of back issues are available for \$3.00 a copy) and can be ordered from Manna for the Journey P.O. Box 23636, Washington, D.C. 20026.



VIGNETTES NEEDED

The editors of the Manna For The Journey issue on "Homophobia/Heterosexism" hope to include "vignettes" which illustrate our experiences of homophobia/heterosexism. If you have an experience to share which illustrates the presence of homophobia/heterosexism in your life, we'd like to hear it! Both gay/lesbian and straight are invited to respond; we know it affects all of us. Please limit your story to one typewritten page, please. Send to Kristan Burkert, [redacted], Oak Grove, OR [redacted]. Please note whether or not you are willing to have your name (or city) printed with the illustration. Anonymous material is acceptable. Deadline is July 1. Thank you!

NEWS FLASH!!

We stopped the press long enough to welcome Crescent Heights United Methodist Church in West Hollywood who has just voted to become a Reconciling Congregation.

BUILDING RECONCILING CONGREGATION

When asked to write this article about my working with churches that are, or might be considering their attitudes on homosexuality, my immediate flippant response was "I can sum it up in three words 'It ain't easy'" My work may be easier as a 72 year old gay man who served for eighteen years as the Conference staff member relating to Youth and Campus Ministries since my ministry has been affirmed by many in a very positive way. I would like to encourage other gay men and lesbians to continue their struggle to be accepted for membership and leadership in the church.

My first experience of a study on homosexuality was with a Mid Peninsula Parish of six United Methodist churches in the San Mateo area of California in 1980. I had just come out a couple of months earlier in the media of the annual conference that I was a gay man. I began talking with our Parish Chairperson and community worker and the first study/session was being considered. Before the proposal was acted upon, our treasurer wrote that to even suggest such a study would mean that "homos" would be rushing into our churches and taking over our Administrative Boards. This prompted me to say that a Reconciling Congregation position will not guarantee that any gays will even attend the church.

Those of us who are to do the promoting of studies and actions by the church need to be able to verbalize a genuine love for the straights and all who are struggling to understand homosexuality and homosexuals. In order for a church to consider becoming a reconciling congregation, it is essential that the pastoral staff leadership and one or more key layperson of the church be in favor of having a study. I've not found it possible to get anything accomplished where the pastor is not willing to support the study and to speak in favor of it from the pulpit.

Working through congregational channels is very important, for the process we use can be more valuable than a final positive voting action, because it provides a number of official groups to study the issues. Out of these groups come the positive recommendations that are given before a vote is taken in an Administrative Board or congregational meeting. In each of the four situations I have worked in, it has taken 10 months to a year just in getting permission for a study and additional months are spent in getting plans made and securing leadership for a study. We moved through Church and Society Commission, Council on Ministries and eventually through the Administrative board. Each grouping had to have a mini study before they could pass on their affirmative action. Much education takes place through the whole process!

In Wesley Church Fresno, it was moved that we become a reconciling congregation, this recommendation had to pass through several sub-groups before it came to the Administrative board. Wesley Church has approximately 900 members. I mention this because it takes much more work with a larger church with only a few lesbian and gay men than it takes in a smaller congregation. Now Wesley not only seeks lesbian and gay involvement but it has hired a part time gay man to work with the children and also sponsors a gay and lesbian rap group and the only group of Parents and Friends of Gays in Fresno. They also have another gay United Methodist minister voluntarily giving worship, leadership and preaching. The senior pastor, Don Fado, has been very actively supportive of gays.

Following Wesley Church as a staff member for Program Coordination, I retired completely and became a member of Bethany Church in San Francisco (a Reconciling Congregation) and I've had the job of helping to design the initial study programs at Temple Church in San Francisco and Trinity in Berkeley. It took almost ten months of pre-planning, assuring staff support and finally extensive study groups. These two churches have not yet voted officially but both are acting out their being Reconciling Churches because they are inclusive in their approach already.

Another pre-requisite toward positive results, is to keep our expectations of the study programs low. If they only begin to use words such as "heterosexual, homosexual, and gay and lesbian" in their conversations, progress has been made. Full understanding requires more study than we may anticipate.

A major study can become more important in recruiting folk to attend if the following are required. 1) Pre-registration should be required and with it the costs for at least part of the study materials. Readings should be mailed or passed out several days before the event with the expectation that much of the material will be read in advance. Other items may be distributed at each session if there is more than one session. 2) You will benefit in knowing who is coming in order to be prepared with meals and to adjust your preparation of the study group. You also need to know in advance, if possible, any particular negative persons that may be present. Patience is needed. You may adjust your plans if you have three or four evening sessions or a one all day event. 3) If more than a dozen persons are going to attend, small groups of about 6 or 8 persons are necessity. The moderator of the event or chairperson of the committee presenting the event can benefit the process by having the resource leader share an outline of what they will present in the study to the small

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group leaders, panel members and any others working on the study event. They'll be better prepared! Leaders too, should read the required material in advance. Provide a preparation session for your leaders before the event.

A study event should include a panel of selected gays and lesbians and perhaps a parent of a gay or lesbian. In all studies in which I've participated or helped prepare, the panel has been rated the most moving and educational aspect of the study. Other items may include a resource leader who deals with Biblical perspectives and who may include in the presentation the positive step of the Methodist faith journey by 1) study of scripture, 2) reason, 3) tradition and 4) experience making all of these of importance in the process of decision. A worship experience stressing inclusiveness may be needed.

The planning group needs to have a prepared written evaluation instrument that will give them feedback on the persons feelings about each aspect of the study. This can be used for a resource in preparing further study.

If you would like samples of materials used in these studies, write or phone me at [REDACTED] San Francisco, CA. [REDACTED]

Bob Cary



EDITORIAL

I just attended my first national Affirmation meeting (I highly recommend attending to everyone!). One highlight for me was our closing time together. Folks shared words or short phrases of what they were feeling about themselves and about the weekend. For some reason I couldn't come up with the words, a highly unusual occurrence for me. But after I got home, I found it!

"Evangelize." It's not particularly a word of joy or thanksgiving. When I call it a concern, I don't want to evoke negative connotations. Especially because the word is often associated with the Falwells, Robertsons, and 'Good News-ers'. I know what a positive experience evangelizing can be. My word is full of energy and excitement.

When I got back to Dallas, that's when I reached my "mountaintop". I realized that there are other gay men and lesbians, who like me, are wanting their part of this Wesleyan heritage. A heritage of the redemptive, reconciling power of Jesus Christ in this world. Two stories, but not really. Together they form one great story. As the old hymn goes, "we've a story to tell to the nations...". Let me tell you, it was told to me again, that weekend by brothers and sisters I just found. And their stories empowered me.

On the first night of the meeting, each one had to tell how they found out about Affirmation. I actually could not remember. Do you remember how you found out? Did it take an effort on your part (as in writing national or calling someone locally) or was the effort extended towards you (self explanatory)? Now for an even more important question; Who have you told about Affirmation?

It can easily be said that our's is a community in crisis. AIDS is stealing precious friends and loved ones from us. For us in Texas and Georgia, the Supreme Court will soon be making landmark decisions as to whether homosexuality is a crime. Other communities are facing legislative issues dealing with denial of basic human rights. And we are bombarded by 'sadducees and pharisees' with condemnation and hate. Depressing, to the point of paralyzing. But I know a difference. I'm guessing you do, too. Still, it's up to us to tell!

A member of our local group, a former Baptist, joined the church that many of our local members have joined. None of us knew him when he joined the church. Still someone asked him to attend our Affirmation meeting the next night. We weren't sure if he'd be there. He was. As we went around the room that night in closing prayer, it became obvious that this was a man who had been redeemed and affirmed. What a mighty witness we would have missed if someone had not told him about Affirmation.

Sometimes I feel like our community has put its faith in the closet when we took out our sexuality. Maybe it comes from this generation of self-centeredness. Maybe it's because, historically, the church has led society into trying to shame us out of existence. To borrow a phrase from Angie Angst, sometimes we're "sharing impaired". Go ahead. Tell your story! Tell THE story! And get ready for a blessing.

Mike Merrifield

ARTICLES REQUESTED

The next newsletter is scheduled to come out in the beginning of Aug. I need all articles, notices, and gossip in by July 26.

I would encourage you to use the Affirmation newsletter to share your experience and knowledge with other folk throughout the country. Editorials are welcome, we all benefit from hearing various viewpoints and beliefs held by our brothers and sisters.

We are deciding a name for this newsletter at the fall meeting in D.C. Please send me your suggestions so they can be presented to the group in September.

Send all materials for the newsletter to Fritz Schultz

[REDACTED]
San Francisco, California
[REDACTED]

REGIONAL ORGANIZING

KANSAS CITY AFFIRMATION

An enthusiastic and growing group of men and women meet in Kansas City on the first Tuesday of each month for a time of fellowship, potluck, Communion, and programming and strategizing for common concerns. A videotape which addresses Biblical references often used to condemn homosexuality is currently in production. The group provides a brochure to those interested who live in the Kansas City metropolitan area and in rural Kansas and Missouri. For information on the group, write: Rev. Stuart Whitney and Rev. Susan Vogel, [REDACTED] Kansas City, MO [REDACTED].

DALLAS/FORT WORTH AFFIRMATION

The Dallas/Fort Worth group sponsored a regional retreat April 19-20 which drew twenty-five men and women from the Metroplex, Austin and Oklahoma City. Fellowship and a worship service led by Gene Leggett were interspersed with discussions on Homosexuality and the Bible, Forgiveness and recreational time. The group meets on the fourth Monday for a potluck, devotional and program and there is an additional monthly social function. The group is currently in mission through work with the AIDS Action Project and planning a booth for Razzle Dazzle Dallas. Contact the Dallas/Fort Worth group through Tim Tyner, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Dallas, TX [REDACTED].

ATLANTA AFFIRMATION

The Atlanta Affirmation folks are planning a Affirmation table and an information packet for each delegate to the North Georgia Annual Conference this spring. Members of the group are active in Grant Park/Aldersgate United Methodist Church. Atlanta Affirmation meets every month on the first Thursday and can be contacted through Quentin Hand, [REDACTED] Decatur, GA [REDACTED].

OKLAHOMA CITY AFFIRMATION

On April 12th eighteen men and women gathered to form the heart of our newst group. They enjoyed the writings of Michael Collins, dinner, fellowship and news from the national meeting in Seattle. The group plans to meet twice monthly as their agenda of spiritual, social and outreach interest unfold. Oklahoma City Affirmation can be reached at [REDACTED] Oklahoma City, OK [REDACTED].

SEATTLE AFFIRMATION

Seattle Affirmation folk were gracious hosts and hostesses for the Affirmation Spring Meeting. They report that they enjoyed it and send all of us warm huggs. The group continues to meet on the first Thursday at Wallingford UMC for a business and worship meeting and on the third Monday at various homes for a potluck dinner. They plan to present supportive resolutions at Pacific Northwest Annual Conference along with Seattle's two Reconciling Congregations: Wallingford & Capitol hill UMC's. On May 1st, Reconciliation Sunday will be celebrated with Wallingford UMC. Contact the group at [REDACTED] Seattle, WA [REDACTED].

NEBRASKA AFFIRMATION

Nebraska Affirmation in conjunction with several other groups including the Ministry in Human Sexuality and the Nebraska Conference UMC Board fo Chuch and Society, sponsored a highly successful seminar entitled Spirituality and Homosexual Persons, A Dialogue Conference. Attended by approximately eighty persons, the seminar focused on Biblical-Theological Understandings and featured retired United Methodist Bishop Melvin Wheatley and Lucille Wheatley, D. J. Stiles, Morris Floyd, Beth Richardson and Mark Bowman. Alternating between Omaha and Lincoln, they meet for potlucks, fellowship, discussion and worship. Their address: [REDACTED] Lincoln NE [REDACTED].

ST. LOUIS AFFIRMATION

The St. Louis group is engaged in diverse ministries including helping start a Methodist Federation for Social Action group, signing worship services for the deaf and alternating worship and discussion meetings on the third Sunday of each month. Telephone the group through Al in Illinois at [REDACTED] or Bruce in Missouri at [REDACTED].

MID ATLANTIC AFFIRMATION

The key thrust of the Washington D.C. group is preparation for the Fall Meeting of Affirmation which they will host September 19th-21st. In the interim, they plan to meet with Bishop Yeakel of the Baltimore Conference and sponsor an ecumenical educational event in Northern Virginia. Group contact can be made through [REDACTED] Washington D.C. [REDACTED].

NEW YORK WEST AFFIRMATION

This group, still in its forming stage, has moved its planning meetings to the Buffalo area. Contact persons are being sought for Rochester and Syracuse, and they are still looking for participants. Announcements of initial programs are forthcoming. Contact this group through Rev. Greg Franklin, [REDACTED] Hamburg, NY [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

SAN FRANCISCO AFFIRMATION

After a potluck dinner, Sunday May 18th, at Temple UMC at 5:30 pm, the group will welcome Jack Pantelo, Co-Convenor of the AIDS Interfaith Network. Jack will provide an overview of how the churches have responded to the AIDS epidemic/crisis and discuss how the gifts of the entire community are needed for healing. The next meeting will be held June 22, at Temple UMC at 5:30 pm. Contact Fritz Schultz, [REDACTED] S.F. CA [REDACTED].

OREGON/IDAHO AFFIRMATION

The Oregon/Idaho Affirmation Network consists of 65-70 persons from the whole annual conference, most of whom are not gay men or lesbians. They will be having an information table at Annual Conference. Work has begun on the creation of a gay/lesbian fellowship group in Portland. For more information write to: [REDACTED] Portland, OR [REDACTED].

Tim Tyner of Dallas, Texas has taken over the responsibility of editing the Regional Organizing page and collecting information from the local groups. You can greatly assist Tim in his work by putting him on your local mailing list. Send information to [REDACTED] Dallas, TX, [REDACTED].

NEWS ABOUT THE TRAVEL POOL

Members of AFFIRMATION who have attended national meetings in recent years know that a travel pool has been used to share expenses among those participating. Previous newsletters have carried a summary of how the travel pool worked.

At our spring meeting two major changes to the travel pool were made!

1. Persons attending their first national meeting who live in or near the host city are exempted from the travel pool. This will have the effect of raising average travel costs and increasing the amount of a travel pool share. It will also enable local persons new to group to feel free to participate in a national meeting without taking on the added financial responsibility of the travel pool. It is hoped that this will increase participation by such persons who might feel hesitant about committing themselves to that expense when they don't know the group.

2. It was agreed that the amount by which the travel pool would be subsidized at a given meeting would be based on the "profit" from the previous meeting (the total of registration fees collected less the total of the meeting expense). Persons wishing to participate in the meeting who could not afford a full share of the travel pool can draw on this subsidy to reduce their costs. Subsidy from meeting registrations has always been used to assist persons in this way, but its availability has not always been well known. In addition, it was impossible to plan the amount of this assistance in advance because funds from the current meeting were used. This change enables us to say in advance to all potential participants we have so many dollars available for the subsidy. We will divide it among those requesting assistance on the basis of their stated need as a proportion of the estimated amount of a travel pool share. (Look for the form to request this assistance elsewhere in this newsletter.)

The down side of this change is that, after paying travel pool subsidy from the Seattle meeting, there was a net loss of about \$100 on the meeting's expense. (This loss would have been greater if our Seattle hosts had not donated so much of the food expense--many thanks to them!) Therefore, start up funds for the new travel pool subsidy mechanism will have to be provided from another source. The coordinating committee has agreed to attempt to raise the needed funds, though of course there can be no guarantee the full amount needed will be raised. If requests for assistance exceed the amount raised, the amount available will be allocated as indicated above.

Because the least expensive air fares typically require a one month advance purchase, we have set the deadline to request travel assistance for about two months before the meeting. This allows persons to receive these funds in time to take advantage of these fares.

Spokespersons

Morris Floyd

Minneapolis, MN

Mary Gaddis

Holy City, CA

Coordinating Committee

Judy Cayot

Albany, CA

Beth Richardson

Nashville, TN

Mary Gaddis

Holy City, CA

Maggie Roe

Lincoln, NE

Lyle Loder

West Hollywood, CA

Brad Rymph

Washington, DC

D. J. Porter

New Hope, PA

Mike Underhill

Chicago, IL



One lesbian and one gay man whose names cannot be used.

IS IT POSSIBLE TO USE THE MAILING LIST?

A number of local groups have inquired about whether it is possible to use names off of Affirmation's mailing list to help promote local activities. The answer to this question is both yes and no.

Affirmation's national mailing list is strictly confidential and not released to anyone beyond the Coordinating Committee or their designees. We do this because many persons on our list could be subject to discrimination and/or loss of vocation if their participation with Affirmation became publicly known. In a broad sense, this policy circumscribes local groups from receiving names off the list.

HOWEVER, this does not make the list unusable. Leaders within Affirmation nationally can send mail out to person on behalf of local groups if provided with return-addressed envelopes, flyers, printed letters, stamps, etc. Contact John Hannay or Shirley Taylor if Affirmation can help your local group in this regard.

John Hannay

Washington, DC

Shirley Taylor

Alameda, CA

CONFESSION MADE

The General Board of Global Ministries passed on April 10, 1986 a recommendation: "That the General Board of Global Ministries adopt the Statement on 'The Church As A Healing Community and the AIDS Crisis'. In this statement the Board of Global Ministries challenges the church to be a healing community and to reach out through prayers, advocacy, education and direct service to provide care and supportive ministries to person with AIDS, their families and friends.

The Board also concurred with the General Board of Discipleship's Resolution on "Ministry in the Midst of the AIDS Epidemic" and joined with it to confess that we as a total church have

not always responded lovingly in the midst of this epidemic in this regard and to applaud all local churches who have undertaken ministries of compassion and hope.

Their statement went further to say that they oppose homophobia and other prejudices which use the AIDS epidemic to discriminate against person and urges congregations, health and welfare institutions related to the connectional unit of the church, and church members to work through their local and state human rights agencies and political networks to ensure the protection of the rights of persons with AIDS, their friends and families; just as it asks this in the case of all persons and families affected by any form of disease or handicapping condition.

REGISTRATION FORM: FALL AFFIRMATION MEETING
"Building Our Family"

September 19-21, 1986
Washington, D.C.

(Please send this in as soon as possible!)

Name _____ Home phone (opt.) _____
Address _____ Work phone (opt.) _____
_____ Zip Code _____

Please include your registration fee payable to "National Affirmation".
I. Please check one of the following:

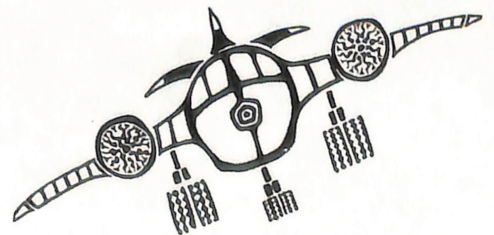
- ☐ I am coming to D.C. My registration fee is enclosed.
☐ I am coming to D.C. and will send in my registration by Sept. 10.
☐ I cannot come to D.C. but want to enclose a contribution or newsletter subscription renewal (\$15/yr.).

II. If you are coming to D.C. please give us the following information:

- ☐ I am arriving on _____ (please give date) and will need housing in a private home from _____ (date) to _____ (date). ☐ I prefer a non-smoking home (please check).
☐ I am arriving on _____ (please give date) and would like information on nearby hotels (approx. \$60 per night for a double) at which to stay.
☐ I have special dietary and/or housing concerns (please state):

PLEASE SEND THIS FORM TO: Peter DeGroote, _____
Washington, D.C. _____ BY SEPTEMBER 10 (We cannot guarantee your

PLEASE SEND THIS FORM TO: Peter DeGroote, _____
Washington D.C. _____ BY SEPTEMBER 10 (We cannot guarantee your choice after this date). Again, you will be sent exact information as to meeting sites, transportation from airports, etc. once your registration is received. IF YOU HAVE LAST-MINUTE CONCERNS (after September 10), call Peter at _____. Again, PLEASE GET YOUR REGISTRATIONS IN ON TIME!



TRAVEL ASSISTANCE REQUEST
FALL 1986 AFFIRMATION MEETING

Name _____
Address _____
_____ Phone _____

If a share of the travel pool is \$200.00, I would need \$_____ in assistance.

Mail to AFFIRMATION Travel Pool, P.O. Box 1021, Evanston, IL 60204. Deadline is July 10, Persons will be notified about the amount available by August 15. Persons should understand that we cannot be precise in projecting the travel pool amount.

Persons who have questions can write or call Morris Floyd for more information.

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